

# Project Canopy Assistance Grants

## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions



### **What should we do first if we are interested in applying for a grant?**

Read over the entire application packet very carefully! Sign up to attend one of the grant training sessions. Talk with others in your community, including your Tree Warden or Conservation Commission, to develop consensus on your project.

### **Can more than one grant award be made in an eligible community?**

This is possible; however, eligible groups are encouraged to cooperate and partner on grant projects.

Grantees that presently have a Project Canopy assistance grant must show significant progress with the existing endeavor and justification for requesting additional funds.

### **Can a project site be located on private property or public property with limited access?**

Project Canopy funds cannot be used to improve private property unless public access is guaranteed. Trees must be planted on public property or on property with free public access that is visible from, or contiguous to, transportation corridors. For example: trees can be planted on private property, e.g., a homeowner's front yard, when adequate planting space is not available within the public right of way and a planting agreement has been signed by the homeowner.

### **What will the grant pay for?**

The only costs eligible for reimbursement are those associated with one or more of the following:

- ◆ Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants
- ◆ Purchase of essential supplies and materials
- ◆ Purchase and planting of trees, along with maintenance during the grant period, for research and demonstration projects only. For all other tree planting and maintenance projects, refer to Project Canopy's Planting and Maintenance grant program. Three-year maintenance with a 90% survival rate is expected on all plantings. Only maintenance costs incurred during the grant period are eligible for reimbursement.
- ◆ Costs associated with site preparation and soil amendments

NOT ALLOWABLE is the purchase of machinery or equipment; construction of any kind, e.g. sidewalks or roads; purchase of land or land charges; purchase of plant material classified as invasive species by Project Canopy; purchase and planting of norway maples; normal, community wide periodic maintenance of utility (telephone, electric, and cable) lines unless it is site specific and necessary to the project.

If you are uncertain about particular costs, please contact the Project Canopy Director at 1-800-367-0223

### **What can be counted as cash or in-kind matching funds and how is match documented?**

The most common types of matching contributions are direct personnel costs (documented by payroll sheets), volunteer time (documented by sign-in sheets), or materials and services purchased by the grant recipient or donated by others. In-kind contributions for urban forestry projects include: donated professional services (documented by consultant invoice), donated plant materials (documented by vendor invoice or letter), and donated supplies such as mulch, soil, office supplies, and postage (documented by letter). The value of volunteer time is calculated at market rate for the service provided, e.g., volunteers planting trees can be valued at \$15 per hour, while a consulting arborist's donated time might be valued at \$35-\$50 per hour. All in-kind contributions must be "allowable" expenses under the program, e.g., construction dollars cannot be used as match. Other federal program funds cannot be used.

**Should we include letters of support?**

Applications that include a broad range of support will be favored. Letters of support from key cooperators will strengthen the application, but should include specific commitments, e.g., amount of volunteer labor committed and estimated services, and not just a general statement of support. Letters of support should be submitted with the grant application.

**What skills and benefits come from the assistance of Project Canopy personnel and partners in planning and implementing this project?**

The program has personnel who can help you with project design, budget development, plant selection, and grant writing and administration. The program also has many partners who can assist with project development.

**If a grant is awarded, how will the funds become available?**

Once the grants are awarded, recipients are reimbursed for satisfactory work completed within the grant period as described in the original scope of work. Grant funds are not provided up front. Final receipts for reimbursement must be submitted along with verification of matching expenses or in-kind services. Completed reimbursement forms shall be submitted to the Maine Forest Service within 30 days of grant completion. Grantee can expect reimbursement within 45 days of receipt submittal.

**Can Project Canopy grant funds be used to pay for consulting services if the person performing those services is also employed by the grantee?**

The answer to the above question is yes, if all of the following criteria are met:

1. The project is a new initiative and would not otherwise occur during the funding cycle.
2. The scope of the project is outside of the employee's normal duties.
3. Time spent on the project is separate from, and not in lieu of, the employee's normal duties.
4. Reimbursable costs must be attributable to a specific budgeted cost objective.
5. The consulting services are potentially available to any other client.
6. The practice is not prohibited by the procurement rules of the grantee.
7. All grantee procurement rules are followed in entering into the agreement
8. A letter is submitted prior to award from the employer stating the above conditions have been met.

**What are some examples of projects that have been funded in the past?**

Visit the Project Canopy website for a summary of grant projects from previous years

[www.projectcanopy.org](http://www.projectcanopy.org)

**If you have questions regarding Project Canopy grants, please contact Becky Tavani at 207-287-4987 or [becky.tavani@maine.gov](mailto:becky.tavani@maine.gov)**